



## OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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TO: Authorized Representatives

FROM: Marion Erp, Data Control Specialist  
Division of Health Enhancement and Safety

Anne Rainey and Lisa Smith  
Data Specialists  
Division of Special Education

DATE: May 12, 2008

RE: **REMINDER: School Discipline Data Collection Reports for School Year 2007-2008 are due June 30, 2008**

Each public school in Montana must submit their school discipline data on suspensions/expulsions for the 2007-2008 school year by June 30, 2008. The electronic application will open for submissions to OPI on May 15, 2008. A memo was sent to school districts at the beginning of the school year - in September of 2007. All information concerning the school discipline data collection (instruction manual, FAQ sheet (frequently asked questions), Glossary of Codes, memo sent to authorized representatives last fall, and the in-school and out-of-school worksheets to help you prepare for electronic filing) can be found on the OPI Web at: <http://www.opi.mt.gov/schooldisciplinedc/index.html>.

The data to be reported are any incident that takes place during the reporting period (July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008) that:

- a) results in out-of-school suspension or expulsion, regardless of the length of time, for any enrolled student;
- b) involves weapons, drugs or violence in which the perpetrator is a non-student (someone not enrolled in the school, such as a former student or dropout; and
- c) involves in-school suspensions of students with disabilities.

The reporting of **in-school suspension** of all students with disabilities will continue this year. The federal definition for in-school suspension is those instances in which a child is temporarily removed from his/her regular classroom(s) for disciplinary purposes but remains under the direct supervision of school personnel. Direct supervision means school personnel are physically in the same location as students under their supervision. Students with disabilities mean students who are receiving special education and related services in accordance with an active IEP. This federal reporting requirement is being implemented in accordance with instructions from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. Please refer to the *School Discipline Data Reporting Instruction Manual* for School Year 2006-2007 for further information on reporting in-school suspensions of all students with disabilities.

*"It is the mission of the Office of Public Instruction to improve teaching and learning through communication, collaboration, advocacy, and accountability to those we serve."*

Training in the form of a video presentation, the School Discipline Instruction Manual, FAQ's, a Glossary of Codes and worksheets, can all be accessed by clicking on the "Incident Help" button in the lower right section of the main menu screen, and then choosing School Discipline Web Page. The training is broken up into chapters for easy reference to each section. These trainings can also be accessed from the IRIS tab on the OPI home page under the Instructions button: School Discipline Information Page, or from the Programs & Services of OPI dropdown, under Health, Nutrition and Safety: School Discipline Data Collection.

Please read through the following issues that have caused problems in the past:

- a) If a school has no incidents to report for the school year, a report must still be submitted with the "No Incidents to Report" box checked.
- b) A "perpetrator identifier" is a unique ID (initials, numbers, or combination of letters and numbers) assigned by the school and is unique to an individual at a particular school. Starting with the 2008-09 school year, that individual identifier will be the state AIM student identifier, so the sooner you convert your student identification system, the better, but it won't be mandatory for this year. If an individual is involved in more than one incident during the school year, the same perpetrator identifier must be used for that individual in each subsequent incident. For subsequent incidents, the application will pre-fill the gender, race and program status codes if the perpetrator is a student.
- c) The application is incident driven - this means that an incident is reported in the application and any students suspended or expelled out-of-school as a result of that incident are reported under that incident. An example is a fight that breaks out on the school grounds and as a result there were four students suspended out-of-school. The incident would be reported as a fight and the four students who were suspended out-of-school would be reported under that one incident.
- d) Please remember that the definition of a "victim" includes an individual who suffers physical or emotional injury, loss or death because of a voluntary act by another person. The definition does not include a student in an event involving a large population within the school such as a bomb threat evacuation or a school lockdown. A validation check has been built into the Web application that will remind you of the definition for "victim" if a number of victims greater than 5 is entered. You can bypass the validation if the number is correct, or revise the number if it is in error.
- e) PLEASE NOTE: We would again like to emphasize a federal ruling that has been in effect but inconsistently followed. According to 18 U.S.C. 921, a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to school must be expelled from school for a period of not less than 1 year, except that the trustees may authorize the school administration to modify the requirement for expulsion of a student on a case-by-case basis. That student shall be suspended immediately by a teacher, a superintendent or a principal, but the code in the electronic system should be recorded as an expulsion with services (Action Code 250) or an expulsion without services (Action Code 260) and shall include the number of school days the student was suspended pending board action.

Accurate data are essential in this collection because these data are used by the OPI to complete several state-level reports required by the U.S. Department of Education as well as to determine the federally required persistently dangerous schools designation. The data are also used for longitudinal studies in five-year plans.

If you have any questions, concerns, or problems with any part of this data collection, please contact Marion Erp at 406-444-1951, [merp@mt.gov](mailto:merp@mt.gov); Anne Rainey (Special Ed), 406-444-4430, [arainey@mt.gov](mailto:arainey@mt.gov); or Lisa Smith (Special Ed), 406-444-0685, [lsmith2@mt.gov](mailto:lsmith2@mt.gov).